



The Rhodoholic



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 26:6 September 2015

President's Message

As the new president of the CVRS I reviewed the past newsletters & minutes of our own club as well as District 1 and the American Rhodo Soc. I am amazed at the commitment our members display to go the extra mile and make our general meetings, conferences, sales, tours and yes, the picnic memorable. So thanks to all the volunteers that make this society tick. Whether you are a new member or not, I encourage you to get involved in some aspect of the club. You will be rewarded with new friendships & opportunities to learn about, and gain expertise in, everything Rhodo.

Looking forward, we have a great program planned for our 2015-16 general meetings, starting with our first meeting this Wednesday Sept. 9th at the Duncan United Church at 7:30 pm where Gordon MacKay will speak

Wed, Sept 9, 2015

**CVRS Monthly Meeting
Two Georges Featured in
Gordon MacKay's Talk
Duncan United Church
7:30 pm**

See page 3 for more details

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Ballfee—One of our featured rhododendron hybrids beginning with B

on the plant introductions of George Forrest and George Sherriff. Besides the monthly program I am pleased to note the development of the Rhodo Species Garden is proceeding after a Memo of Understanding was signed in July between the Island clubs, VIU and Milner Gardens. We have paid our \$5000 cash commitment to the project.

An informal committee of 2 is looking into the development of a centrally located propagation facility for demonstrations and growing stock for sales, gifts, and donating to garden projects. More to come on this!

We also have to look forward to a forecast of continued drought to the end of October and possibly for the next 3 years. This is worrisome for those on water restrictions and wells alike. What does this mean for us rhodoholics given rhodos are so shallow rooted? We can learn from each other the best ways to manage and maximize water usage and keep our rhodos and companion plants healthy during this drought. For instance, I save my dish water and use it for all my potted plants and particularly vulnerable plants that need more water than they can get from the drip system. I started watering in April while there was still good soil moisture with a drip system at the bare minimum and it seems to be adequate for established plants. I applied between 2 - 4 inches of mulch on the more exposed beds. I only fertilized once this year, in March, to minimize new growth



and I pruned back some of my larger rhodos to reduce transpiration.

How will this drought affect the propagation calendar? Should we take cuttings earlier? We have an avid propagators group that I am sure will be considering these questions.

I am looking forward to working with all of you to learn more about rhodos and companion plants and having fun at the many events planned this year.

Carrie Nelson

This month in the *Rhodoholic*
we are featuring
**Rhododendron hybrids that
start with the letter B.**
Enjoy!

Bambino



Two Georges Featured in Gordon MacKay's Talk at Wednesday's Meeting

Our first fall meeting of the CVRS at the Duncan United Church this Wednesday features a local plant specialist, Camosun College lecturer and horticulturist Gordon MacKay of Alba plants talking about the exploits, achievements and introductions of two Scottish plant hunters, George Sherriff and George Forrest. Gordon has a lifelong passion for gardening and plants graduating from Threave School of Gardening in Scotland followed by three years and a diploma from the Pershore College of Horticulture. Gordon visited Vancouver Island in 1994 to help set up a specialty plant nursery and enjoyed the challenge so much he stayed. He created Alba Plants and is part of the therapeutic horticulture team at Providence Farm and instructs in the Horticulture program at Camosun College.



George Forrest 1873–1932



Major George Sherriff 1898 – 1967



Barbara Reuthe



Bud Flanagan

Our Shawnigan population of *R. macrophyllum* needs location and identity



R. macrophyllum at Rhododendron Lake near Parksville

There are two known populations of *R. macrophyllum* on the island, a population at Rhododendron Lake south of Parksville and another west of Shawnigan Lake along the old Port Renfrew Road. The former is officially recognized in the records and the latter is not.

E-Flora BC shows the location near Parksville but not the one west of Shawnigan Lake. This latter population was recognized on E-Flora at one time although the GPS coordinates were incorrect, the location being shown as just north of Duncan around Mount Brenton. It was removed from the map because of the incorrect information. There are no herbarium specimens of the southern population in either the BC Provincial Museum, the UBC herbarium, or the herbarium at the University of Washington.



Rhododendron Lake *R. macrophyllum*

We need a couple of volunteers who will go to the site after the forest fire closure and obtain some representative branches for all three herbaria. The BC Provincial Museum is willing to take the material, prepare it and forward the specimens to the other herbaria. The location is not too far along the Old Port Renfrew Road but it is not easy to find and someone who has visited the site in the past should be a member of the party. I am told that it will be necessary to choose a time when the forest gates are open and it will require about 15 minutes bush-whacking to reach the lake.

An accurate GPS reading of the exact location and a photograph must be obtained as an essential component of the official records.

Finally, an additional collection should be made of some flower buds which should be placed in a plastic bag with a moist paper towel. This sample should go to Ben Hall at the University of Washington. In the past, he has examined the DNA of the plants from this location but he would like to repeat the test with new, more sophisticated tests. He said that the initial analysis suggested that this population is not closely related to the Rhododendron Lake or Olympic Peninsula populations but seems closer to populations from further south. It would be interesting to confirm this observation.

Ian E. Efford

Summer Picnic... A Delicious Success

More than 50 members and guests attended the CVRS Summer Picnic on June 20 graciously hosted by Ian and Shirley Efford. With excellent assistance from their children and grandchildren it was a great success.





Due to a healthy surplus from the UK Garden Tour, Vancouver Island Event Catering was hired to provide a delicious summer meal of seafood chowder, Caesar salad, spinach and goat cheese salad, black forest ham croissants, cucumber sandwiches and strawberry shortcake with vanilla ice cream. Along with lots of good conversation the event also included an auction of special plants and garden items, sale of excellent books from the Slaby library and distribution of free rhodos and plants from several sources to all participants. Thanks very much to all who contributed to the auction and rhodo distribution along with Ann Slaby for the book sale items.





The weather was warm and perfect in keeping with most of our 2015 summer and saw most people huddling under Ian and Shirley's fruit trees or in the shade. A brief meeting was held to confirm the New CVRS executives which include President Carrie Nelson and Vice President Sharon Tillie. A very special and rousing thanks was given to retiring Past President Ian Efford for all his exceptional contributions to the CVRS over the past 5 years.



This Year's CVRS Program

September 9 **The Two George's: *The Plant Introductions of Forrest and Sherriff***
Gordon McKay of Alba Plants **Duncan United Church Hall** 7:30 pm

October 7 **Spectacular Gardens of Cornwall, Devon and Chelsea**
The 2015 CVRS UK Tour
St. John's Church Hall Bill Dumont and others 7:30 pm



November 4 **The Rhododendron Gardens of New Zealand – by Dr. Glen Jamieson** on his recent tour of this fascinating southern hemisphere country 7:30 pm



December 2 6 pm **Christmas Party** St. John's Church

January 2016 No meeting

February 3 **Education Event** – members question session and expert panel

March 2 **Biodiversity in the Garden** Doug Justice, Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden

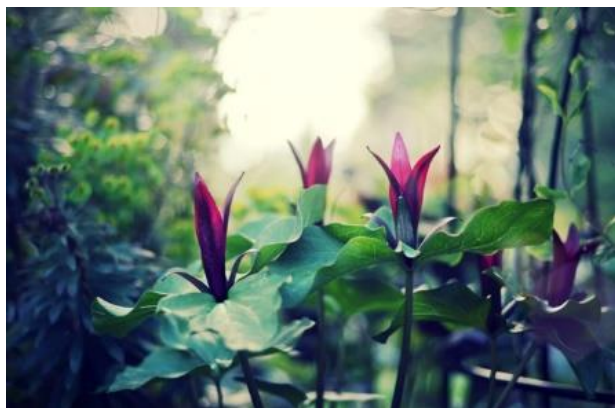
April 6 **Rhododendron Gardens of Vancouver Island** – Ian Efford presents on his recent bestseller book.

April 30

Cowichan Valley Garden Fair and Plant Sale 10 am to 2 pm Cow Ex

May 4

Trillium Talk –Gordon Murray of Murray Trilliums has been an avid and passionate grower of Trilliums since 1988 is and very well qualified to speak on this attractive genus.



May 9-11

CVRS 2016 Spring Bus Tour –West Coast and Tofino

June 18

Summer Picnic and AGM 11:30 am to 2:30 pm – Members Garden

Oct/Nov

CVRS New Zealand Garden Trip

All regular meetings are held on the First Wednesday of the Month at St. John's church hall in Duncan unless shown otherwise above. The executive meets the last Wednesday of each Month.



Beaufort



Bergensiana

Colton Fishacre Garden

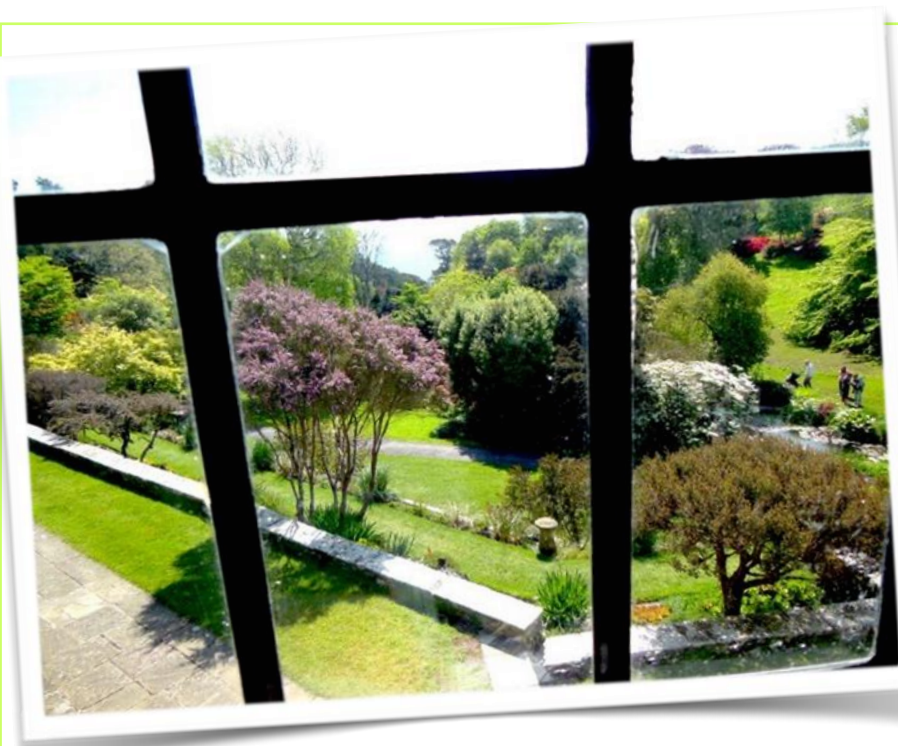
This report is from the UK Trip Team when we visited this special garden on May 16, 2015. After a comfortable overnight stay at the Mercure Hotel in Exeter, we set off at 9:15 a.m. for Coleton Fishacre Garden, a National Trust property acquired in 1982, situated on the coast of Devon in the town of Kingswear. The drive from Exeter took us through the countryside at it's best in mid-spring with rolling green fields interspersed with fields of rapeseed in full, brilliant yellow bloom. The increasingly narrow roads were bordered on either side by high hedgerows full of a mix of native blooms breaking here and there into frothy patches of white cow parsley.



After approximately an hour's travel, the coach turned into the single lane leading to Coleton Fishacre with barely a hair's breadth between the hedgerows on either side. Another sharp turn took us through a narrow entrance, past small buildings and into the carpark where we exited the coach into the warm spring sunshine with brilliant blue skies.

An introduction to the gardens was given to us by one of the gardening staff, following which we were let loose to explore as and where we wanted. An excellent handout helped guide the way. For some of us, the close proximity of the 1920's Arts and Crafts-styled house, built of local slate rubble with slate roof drew us over a cobbles-stoned entry way and into the house to explore the rooms of the former D'Oyly Carte family Art Deco country home which was built between 1923 and 1926 and occupied by the family until 1949. At this time, Rupert D'Oyly's daughter Bridget, sold it. The interior rooms were simple and elegant and evoked an era of leisure and entertainment. Of particular interest to gardeners was the first room to the left upon entering the house. This was a room for the sole use of the lady of the house, Lady Dorothy, to prepare fresh floral vases with flowers from the extensive gardens to complement the many rooms. Quick and easy ac-





cess to the gardens was essential hence the prime location of the room, complete with sinks, benches, shelves and many varied containers.

A walk through the downstairs of the house showed an impressive layout of rooms devoted to the welfare of the family and used by their staff to provide a very comfortable lifestyle for those "upstairs".

Enticing views from upstairs windows eventually drew one out into the extensive gardens which encompass 30 acres of a narrow valley or combe running from the top of the property down to the sea at Pudcombe Cove. It was here that the family spent many pleasurable summer hours swimming and

exploring the tidal rock pools. The garden, originally planted by Lady Dorothy, features many rare and exotic plants which thrive in the tropical climate outside due to the proximity of the Gulf Stream to this part of the Devon coast.

Stepping onto the terrace on the garden-side of the house gave a wonderful view across to the side of the narrow valley planted with trees and shrubs where many rhododendrons were in full bloom and punctuated the green



lawns which were divided by a rill and further down by a upper and lower pond.





Strolling across the Bowling Green Lawn gave access to a path which cut through borders of tropical plants for which the gardens are famous. Huge echiums soared upwards, some in full flowers, others still at the bud



stage. The paths were lined liberally with *Libertia*, their white flowers accenting the tawny, olive green, reed-like foliage. Ubiquitous California poppies sprawled in the sun and many unknown tropical plants filled the gardens. These borders terminated at Gazebo which provided high, narrow but wonderful views of the ocean.

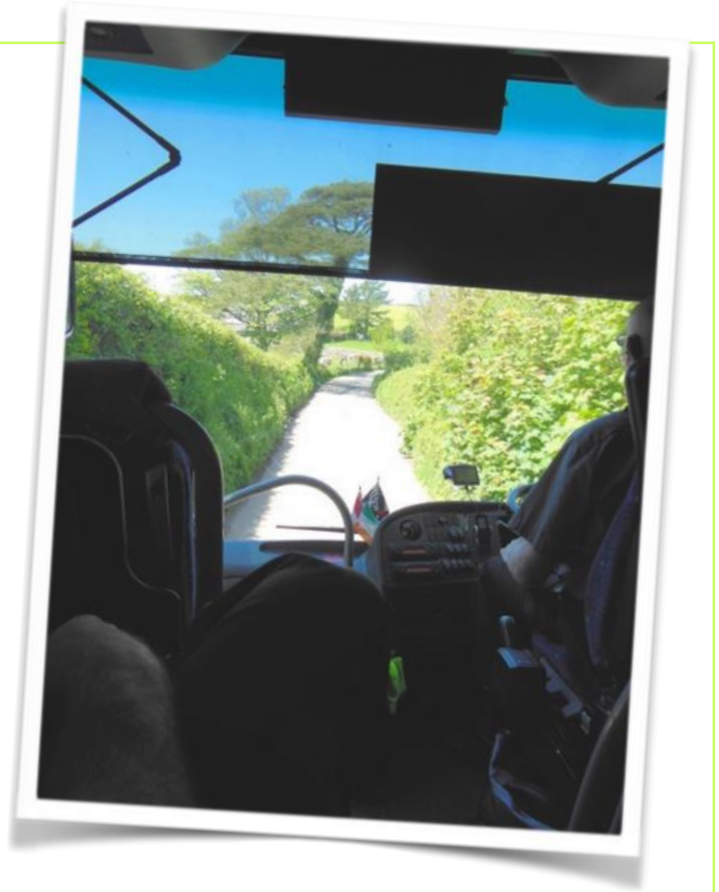
From the Gazebo, a lovely walk beside the pools and rill took one back up towards the house. A perfectly placed bench at the head of the rill provided not only a lovely view but a spot to enjoy a brief break. For the more adventurous, there were extensive walks on the outside perimeters of the gardens, including a scramble down to the bottom gate from where Pudcombe Cove could be viewed.

A welcome lunch break in the sun sheltered courtyard outside the restaurant and gift shop was the next stop before boarding the coach. However, getting out of the parking lot proved easier said than done. As the coach driver attempted to leave, a steady procession of cars, visible to all, came down the lane and wheeled past buildings to enter the gates into the parking lot, regardless of who or what was trying to leave. Altogether an entertaining exercise but not quite as entertaining as watching more visitors having to back up into concealed pullouts built into the hedgerows. To the those drivers with previous experience, this was easily accomplished.

However the coach's progress was hindered by the backing up efforts of an obviously inexperienced driver who finally tucked himself and his car into an impossibly small spot. As we continued along the narrow lane, it was with amusement that we passed other vehicles already tucked away into the hedgerows! To our unflappable coach driver this had been all part of a day's work!

Jillian and Team

FREE ice cream buckets 11.4 L size, no lids, some need washing - about 50 buckets available - I can bring them to the Sept 9 meeting. Send an email to Joe Hudak at barepointgardener@gmail.com with quantity requested.



VE = VERY EARLY BLOOMING RHODOS on Vancouver Island

We are privileged living on Vancouver Island with its mild climate. At lower elevations we seldom experience temperatures below 10 degrees C, this allows us to grow and enjoy the flowers of many VE rhodos. *R. moupinese* is a species that does very well in our area. It forms a two foot high mound that quickly expands to two to three feet across.



R. moupinese

The mild winter of 2014 allowed the pink buds to start opening at the end of Feb. As they open the pink fades to white. With cooler temperatures in early spring the flowers stay on the plant for a much longer time, this is a benefit with all of the VE bloomers as compared to later flowering rhodos. *R. moupinense* comes from the high mountains of Western China and it plays a role in the genetics of many hybrids. Bo Peep, Cilpinense, and Olive all carry *R. moupinense* genes. They all open with varying degrees of pink and all have a compact mounding growing habit of the parent.



Bo Peep

Christmas Cheer and Rosamundi are *R. caucasicum* hybrids. Harold Greer's Guide book has extra details about these rhodos. Both are old hybrids from the late 1800's and early 1900's not surprising many forms of each have been sold over the years. In my garden I have two plants I bought as Rosamundi and they bloom before the one labeled Christmas Cheer. This is opposite to Greer's write up so I am confused and the solution is just enjoy the early pink flowers on all three plants. Lee's Scarlet is another *R. caucasicum* hybrid. The truss is not as full as its sisters but the colour is much deeper and does stand out in the early March morning.



Lee's Scarlet

R. ciliatum (fringes with hairs) originates from Tibet. This is one of the parents for Praecox and Snow Lady. Greer lists both of these as Early but in my gardener they flower within a few days of the VE's. Not only do we get a great display of flowers when very few shrubs are in bloom but the foliage makes these plants worth growing on their own. An extra benefit is that you do not need to dead head these low growing fuzzy plants, just shake.



R. ciliatum



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Snow Sprite (Snow Lady x *R. moupinense*) is another VE in our yard that only grows to one foot high and is ideal at the front of a border. Another dwarf early bloomer is

Shamrock

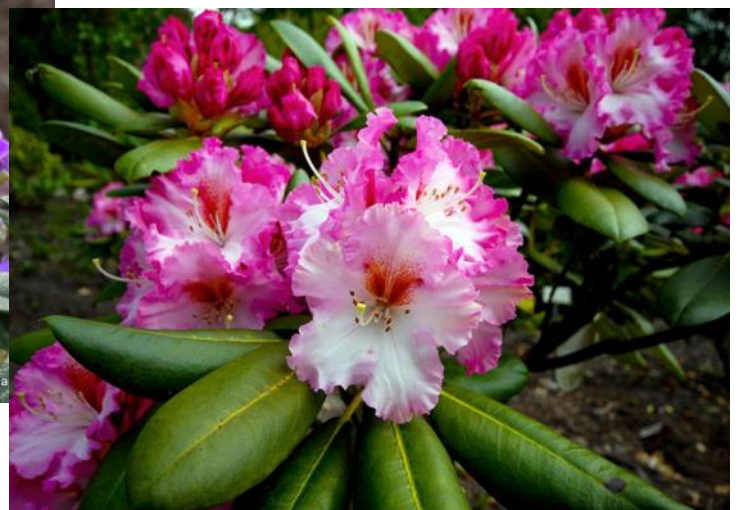
Shamrock. It is supposed to flower on March 17 for St Patrick's Day but last year it flowered in the first week of March. The chartreuse flower color is different for a rhodo.

About 10 years ago I noticed the that some of the low growing rhodos that I had accidentally over mulched the outer branches had layered and rooted. This accident resulted in the plant dramatically increased in circumference. Snow Lady grew two feet tall and five feet across resulting in a great white pillow when in bloom. This layering technique has worked well on other low growing rhodos like Aksel Olsen and Ramapo. You can help the layering by making small cuts in the branch you are going pin down and adding some rooting hormone to the cut. Cover with soil and let nature do the rest.

Joe Hudak



Blumira



Bohlken's Kronjuwel

Species Garden Report, September 2015

Memorandum of Understanding and Gift Agreement

Both these documents were finalized and sent out to the 5 chapter Presidents for signing. The Presidents each sent back a signed copy of the documents. This is a major milestone for the garden since we can now go forward with construction.

Work Party

On June 18, a group of people, representing several chapters, gathered at Milner Gardens as a work party. Small trees had been cut and underbrush gathered in piles at the site of the Species garden. The work party moved these piles to the edge of the garden so that they could be collected and taken away later.

This work was done so efficiently that the party was able to move on to the holding area and remove old fencing and ground cover. A new holding area will be constructed. This is to provide a place for acquired Rhododendrons to be stored safely until they are ready to be planted in the garden.

Schedule

The next step is to arrange for the major tree clearing to be done in the Fall. The site will then be left over the winter to see the effect of the clearing. Geoff Ball is starting to collect quotes for the work and hopes to be able to present the information at the next Advisory meeting.

The August 17 Advisory Group meeting was delayed to late September/ early October so that this information will be ready to be discussed.

Financial

All 5 Chapters have now completed their donations to the Species Garden. Tony Ansdell deposited \$5 to open the account, and has now removed the \$5. The balance in the account is now \$20,000.51 with the cents being accumulated interest.

Geoff Ball has made an application to the Federal Government for a grant of \$40,000. This will come from a fund set up to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canadian Federation. Hopefully, Geoff will be able to tell us the status of this grant at the next Advisory Group meeting.

The ARS has reinstated their endowment fund for \$6000. Tony Ansdell will revive the application that was started before the fund was cancelled last year. It is likely that \$2,000 can be expected.

Plant Selection

Work on the selection of plants for the garden is continuing. Art Lightburn and Al Campbell have visited the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, Washington to discuss the project with Steve Hootman. They will have a report for the next Advisory Group meeting

Tony Ansdell

Coming Events-2015/16

Sept. 9 2015

CVRS Regular Meeting

The Two George's - Gordon McKay

Duncan United Church 7:30 pm

**Sept. 11-13 Floral/Horticulture Competition
Part of Cowichan Exhibition**

Friday & Saturday 9 am to 10 pm

Sunday 9:30 am to 4 pm

Sept. 17, 2015

U. Victoria Finnerty Lecture Series 7 pm

The Sichuan Botanical Expedition – Sue Miliken and Kelly Dobson on their recent China visit where they found 240 species including 5 new rhododendrons

www.uvcs.uvic.ca/Course/Finnerty-at-Forty/

Sept. 19, 2015

View Royal Garden Club Fall Show 1 pm to 3 pm

Shoreline Community School

2750 Shoreline Drive, Victoria

Exhibits of flowers, vegetables & fruits. Admission \$5

<https://viewroyalgardenclub.wordpress.com>

Sept. 20, 2015

UBC Botanical Garden Treasured Bulb Sale 1

1 am to 3 pm

6804 SW Marine Drive at 16th Ave, Vancouver

www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/events

Sept. 26, 2015

U. Victoria Finnerty Lecture Series 1:30 pm

Gardening with Colour

www.uvcs.uvic.ca/Course/Finnerty-at-Forty/

Oct. 3, 2015

The Peninsula Garden Club 60th Anniversary Celebration

11 am to 3:30 pm Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney

Tickets: \$35

Speaker - Dan Hinkley, Monrovia Nursery's leading plant finder

To register, call Frieda: 250-656-9416

www.peninsulagardenclub.ca/

Oct. 7, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting -

CVRS UK Garden Tour 2015

presentation by Bill Dumont and other participants

October 17 & 18, 2015

UBC Botanical Garden Apple Festival

11 am to 4 pm

www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/events

Oct. 17-24, 2015

Rhododendron Species Foundation

Federal Way, Wa.

Foliage Festival & Plant Sale 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

<https://rhodygarden.org/cms/events/9483/foliage-festival-plant-sale/>

Oct. 24, 2015

U Victoria Finnerty Lecture Series

Rhododendron Propagation Workshop – 1 pm

www.uvcs.uvic.ca/Course/Finnerty-at-Forty/

Nov. 4, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting -

The Rhododendron Gardens of New Zealand

Dr. Glen Jamieson on his recent tour of this

fascinating southern hemisphere country 7:30 pm



Besse Howells



Black Widow

Dec. 2, 2015

CVRS **Christmas Party** 6 pm St. John's Church
Bring a food goodie, a gift and something for the Food Bank.

Feb. 3, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting 7:30 pm St. John's Church
Member education event

Mar. 2, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting - **Doug Justice – UBC-
*Biodiversity in the Garden***

April 6, 2016

CVRS Monthly Meeting - Ian Efford -Rhododendron
Gardens of Vancouver Island

Apr. 30, 2016

Cowichan Valley Garden Fair

Cowichan Exhibition 10 am – 2 pm

www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com

Please donate plants for the CVRS plant table

May 4, 2016

CVRS Monthly Meeting

St. John's Church, Duncan- 163 First St. 7:30 pm

www.cowichanrhodos.ca

May 9-11, 2016

CVRS West Coast Tofino Garden Trip

www.cowichanrhodos.com

May 28, 2016

CVGC Annual Flower Show and Tea

St. Peter's Church Hall 10 am

www.cowichanvalleygardenclub.com

Jun. 11, 2016

Community Flower and Garden Show

Cobble Hill Hall – 9 am to 2 pm

www.MillBayGardenClub.com

Jun. 18, 2016

CVRS Summer Picnic and Awards/Wrap Up

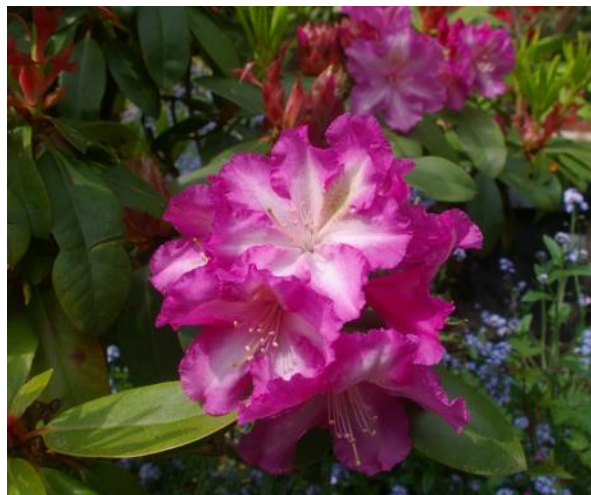
11:30 am to 2:30 pm

Oct/Nov, 2016

CVRS New Zealand Garden Trip

Rhodo Propagation Opportunity

Member Anne Slaby has invited club members interested in propagating Rhodos to her home on September 30 from 10 am to 12am to take cuttings as the property is about to be sold and there are many interesting and unique rhodos on the site. Let Sandra know – pinchofherbs@shaw.ca if you are interested in participating. We will be coordinating carpooling because of limited parking at the site on Cherry Point road south of Duncan.



Betty Andersen



Blue Boy

2015-16 Executive Convenors

- President:
Carrie Nelson
(carrieonupthemountain@gmail.com 250-743-3679)
- Vice President:
Sharon Tillie
(sharontillie@shaw.ca 250-748-8254)
- Past President:
Sandra Stevenson
(pinchofherbs@shaw.ca 250-748-5570)
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Bill Dumont
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- Newsletter Editor:
Bill Dumont
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- Sunshine: Mary Gale
- Tea: Judeen Hendricksen
- Raffle: Hilda Gerrits
- Club Liaison: Alan
Campbell
- Library: Joyce Rodger
- Program Co-ordinator:
Sandra Stevenson, Alan
Campbell,
- History: Ian Efford
- Garden Tours: Alan Murray
- CV Garden Fair: The Team
- Facility Liaison: Roy Elvins
- Christmas Party: The
Team
- Bus Tours: Bill Dumont
- Species Garden Reps:
Siggi Kemmler, Alan
Campbell



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American
Rhododendron Society
P.O. Box 904
Duncan, British Columbia
V9L 3Y3

<http://cowichan.rhodos.ca>



www.cowichanvalleygardenfair.com

Saturday April 30, 2016

Newsletter design/format
& website edits by
Mary-Lynn Boxem
(mboxem@shaw.ca)

Volunteers and Suggestions Welcome

A special welcome to our new members and friends. The CVRS is a volunteer organisation and your executive depends on support from all our members to attend meetings, get involved with the propagation committee and provide input on CVRS programs and plans. Currently, the CVRS is well endowed with funding and seeking suggestions from its members on projects and activities to invest in with a focus on promoting rhododendrons in the Cowichan Valley and Vancouver Island. These can include projects and new programs to recruit new members, establish or extend projects for planting rhododendrons, supporting kid's projects and any other worthwhile projects that will expand our activities into the community. Please speak up in the monthly meetings or pass your ideas onto President Carrie Nelson (carrieonupthemountain@gmail.com).